



**DOCUMENT, NO. 103.**

**BOARD OF ALDERMEN,**

**FEBRUARY 27, 1837.**

*Report of the select Committee, to whom was referred so much of the message of his Honor the Mayor, as relates to furnishing a supply of water for the extinguishing of fires, and laying additional pipes. Laid on the table, and ordered to be printed.*

**THOMAS BOLTON, Clerk.**

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Report of the select Committee, appointed to take into consideration so much of the message of his Honor the Mayor as relates to supplying the city with water for the extinguishment of fires, and laying additional pipes.

This Committee, impressed with the importance of the subject entrusted to their consideration, have directed their attention to an inquiry of the best available means existing in this city to furnish an abundant supply of water for the purposes mentioned in the resolution.

On referring to that part of the message of his Honor the Mayor, relating to this subject, we find it to contain a strong representation of the necessity and importance of securing, at all times and in all convenient situations, a full supply of water for the extinguishing of fires. Whilst the supply to be received from the Croton is put forth as ultimately furnishing all that can be required for the convenience and security of our inhabitants, the years that must elapse before the works in progress for that purpose can be completed, is strenuously urged as a reason why other sources should be obtained for the intermediate time. Pipes might be laid for the distribution of the Croton water, but which might now be filled with such water as is under our control. Other reservoirs might be added, and other wells sunk to supply existing deficiencies. The opinion is also well expressed, that the public good requires the placing of hydrants throughout the city, so near to each other that the ordinary leaders of a hose company would reach from a hydrant to a fire in any situation.

In accordance with these suggestions considerable progress has been made, during the past season, in obtaining a further supply of water, and in laying additional pipes and hydrants. The result has been a material diminution of losses by fire. Whilst the alarms have been numerous, but one instance is known to the Committee, of a serious loss since the present Common Council came into office; nor has a fire, on more than one occasion, made much progress beyond the building in which it originated. Without having before them any materials to form an estimate, the Committee are of opinion that the average amount of losses, since May last, are very considerably less than for the same period of time for several previous years, and this without any reference to the numerous buildings annually erected.

The additional security thus far experienced, forms a strong inducement for further exertions. Reservoirs, placed in various parts of the city, of an elevation equal to that in 13th street, and communicating with it by pipes, would, if well

supplied with water, furnish hydrants on the plan suggested, for the use of every house, from the high grounds north of 80th street to the point of the Battery ; and a greater elevation of those reservoirs would enable us to extend the system of communicating reservoirs and hydrants to the plains at Harlaem. Should each additional reservoir draw from a distinct source, it might afford the use of its separate means in case of injury to either of the others. Deposits of sufficient lengths of hose might be made in every neighborhood ; and thus, in the great majority of instances, the use of means at hand would secure the immediate extinguishing of fires, with little injury to property or danger to personal security.

Our great rivers furnish an obvious source of supply for the principal objects contemplated by the message. Salt water is also supposed to be more efficient than fresh in quenching fire ; but there is a material objection to its distribution by iron pipes, because it must corrode and injure them. Another serious objection arises from the fact that, connected with the main design, we should add as many others, of public convenience and utility, as can well be associated ; and we should consequently endeavor, as far as possible, to render it a source of convenient use to families. The sinking of wells is therefore, in our opinion, a more reasonable project, provided that any adequate quantity can thus be procured. The Committee suppose that this can be effectually accomplished in several parts of the city, and would certainly be found in or near the neighborhood of the Collect. Connected with this branch of the subject, they also take leave to state as their decided opinion, that a supply adequate to all the wants of our inhabitants, of the best water to be found within our limits, ought to be obtained, independent of our ultimate reliance upon the Croton. In a line of communication so very extensive as that project, interruptions to the flow of water must occasionally take place. A proper foresight will provide the best remedy for such disasters, by bringing forth the hidden treasures of water from the deep recesses of our rocks, ready for distribution as public convenience may require.



In support of their opinion that a sufficient quantity of water for all purposes can be obtained by sinking wells, the Committee refer to the known fact, that the Manhattan Company draw from their well in Reed street 1,600,000 gallons in twenty-four hours, and from that in Bleeker street, drilled 450 feet into the rock, a daily supply of 400,000 gallons.

Their confirmed belief of the importance and absolute necessity of independent resources in this matter of the first necessity, and of the additional means required to be taken by a prudent regard of the present and future interests of the city, have induced the Committee to renew negociations with the Manhattau Company for the absolute purchase of all their water works, pipes, lands connected therewith, and water rights mentioned in a schedule annexed to Doc. No. 75, vol. 2d, of the Board of Assistant Aldermen, a copy whereof is hereunto annexed.

The Manhattan Company preferred their former offer of a lease, as stated in the report above referred to; nor could this Committee induce them to name any sum certain, as the consideration of a sale of the lands, and other appurtenances, connected with their water rights; but preferred to renew, and insisted upon the offers heretofore made by them, to leave the estimates of value to arbitrators, to be selected by the parties.

The Committee would have much preferred the naming of an ascertained price. Yet they can see no reason why an arbitration is not as correct a mode of settling this question, as in other cases of familiar occurrence. The selection of individuals at once sufficiently capable and disinterested, cannot be a matter of serious difficulty to the public authorities, more than to individuals, in matters of private interest. They, therefore, respectfully recommend the adoption of the following resolutions:

*Resolved*, That the subject of the valuation of all the water works, pipes, lands and water rights of the Manhattan Company, as set forth in their communication, annexed to Document No. 75, volume 2, of the Board of Assistant Aldermen, be re-

ferred to ——— persons, as arbitrators, ——— of whom shall be appointed by his Honor the Mayor, and ——— by the said Manhattan Company, and that in case of disagreement, the said arbitrators shall appoint an umpire, and the estimate of value fixed upon the property so specified, or in case of their disagreement, by the umpire so to be chosen, shall be final and conclusive, upon the Corporation of the City of New York, and upon the Manhattan Company.

*Resolved*, That after such valuation shall have been duly reported to the Common Council, together with a proper deed of conveyance from the Manhattan Company, free of all incumbrances, approved by the Counsel of the Board, of all the property specified in the schedule above referred to, that the Common Council will apply to the Legislature for a law authorizing the issue of a stock for the whole amount of such valuation, bearing an interest at the rate of five per cent. per annum, and redeemable in ——— years; or otherwise will pay to the said Manhattan Company, the same sum in cash at the option of the Common Council.

IRA B. WHEELER,  
J. P. WHITEHEAD,  
R. R. WARD.

## **PROPOSALS**

**FROM THE**

### **Water Committee of the Manhattan Company.**

The Water Committee of the Manhattan Company have suggested for the consideration of the Common Council the following terms, with the belief that if acceptable to the Common Council, they will be acceded to by the Manhattan Company.

To lease under the authority of the act supplementary to the charter of the Manhattan Company, all their water works, pipes, conduits, canals, and all matters and things appertaining to the same, and the real estate appurtenant to the said works; that is to say, all the land on Reed, Cross, Elm and Duane streets, laid down and colored pink on the map, No. 1, herewith, with the large and small wells, buildings, water works, iron and wooden pipes, appurtenant thereto.

Also, all the land on Bleecker and Mercer streets, laid down and colored pink on map No. 2, herewith, being one hundred feet on Bleecker street, and one hundred and sixty-three feet on Mercer street, with the dwelling-house, wells, and reservoir and water works thereon, and pipes of conduit appertaining thereto.

And also, the reservoir on Chambers street, and also all their right to supply the said city with water.



And inasmuch as the Manhattan Company expect to acquire title to the gore formed in Cross street, between that and Centre street, and also to the land belonging to the estate of the late Mr. Janeway, laid down and colored green on the map No. 1, herewith, for which application has been made to the Supreme Court, and when acquired, propose to erect thereon a reservoir in substitution of that on Chambers street, and thereupon to discontinue the reservoir on Chambers street, and disconnect it with their water works, as no longer necessary or appurtenant thereto, they will provide in the said lease, that upon acquiring title to the said gore of land, the Manhattan Company will erect thereon a reservoir with pipes, and that upon the completion thereof, the said gore, land, reservoir and pipes, shall be deemed and taken as appurtenant to the water works, and as part of the demised premises, and the reservoir on Chambers street shall then be discontinued, and shall be surrendered up to the Manhattan Company, as no longer appurtenant to the water works, so soon thereafter as the same shall be demanded in writing by the Manhattan Company. That the time to be granted be for twenty-one years from the first day of

That an annual rent be reserved of \$16,000, and from and after the completion of the new reservoir, and the substitution of it for that on Chambers street, an additional annual rent or sum equal to six per cent. on the cost of the said gore and land so to be acquired, and of the reservoir with pipes to be built thereon. The Corporation of the City of New York entering into the usual covenants to pay the rent, to keep, maintain, and surrender in good repair, with exception for use and wear, [excluding the wooden pipes,] to pay all taxes and assessments of every kind whatever, except the assessment for opening Centre street.

# INVENTORY

OF

***Lands, Buildings and other Estate,***

OF THE

**MANHATTAN COMPANY,**

**WANTED BY THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF NEW  
YORK, ON LEASE.**

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	VALUE.
One Lot and Building on Elm street, lot 23 by 96 feet . . . . .	\$6,000
One Lot, corner of Elm and Reed streets, 24 by 76 feet, with Buildings thereon . . . . .	8,000
Three Lots on Reed street, 24 by 76 and 75 three, each valued at \$6,000, exclusive of Buildings . . . . .	18,000
Two Lots on Reed street, 24 by 98 feet each, exclusive of Buildings . . . . .	14,000
One angular Lot, corner of Reed and Cross streets exclusive of the value of the large Well . . . . .	8,000
One large Lot, corner of Duane and Cross streets . . . . .	12,000
Stone Engine House on Reed street, two low pressure Engines, copper boilers, 18 horse power each . . . . .	30,000
Large Well and smaller also producing about 1,600,000 gallons of water per 24 hours . . . . .	100,000
Amount carried over . . . . .	<hr/> \$196,000



	VALUE.
Amount brought over . . . . .	\$196,000
Fourteen miles of Iron Pipes, laid with all the necessary branches, stop-cocks, hydrants, to 30 miles of wood pipes of conduit . . . . .	66,000
Bleecker street Water Works, four lots of ground 25 by 100 feet, nearly on Bleecker street, valued at \$10,000 each . . . . .	40,000
One Lot 63 by 50 feet deep, on Mercer street valued at . . . . .	12,000
Reservoir, iron tank, brick Building, on the above Lots [. . . . .	13,200
About 5,600 feet 10-inch Iron Pipe, laid with branches and all the necessary stop-cocks, hydrants, &c. pumps, &c. . . . .	14,700
One Steam Engine, boiler high pressure, complete Well and also Well drilled 400 feet in the rock, whole depth 444 feet . . . . .	6,000
Temporary use of Reservoir in Chamber street, &c. and fixtures, until the Reservoir is built, \$30,000.	25,000